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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000163

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [ECON](#) [PTER](#) [SNAR](#) [FAID](#) [EAGR](#) [EG](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN NORTH SINAI

REF: CAIRO 107

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

- 1.(C) Summary: Embassy officials met with local political, business, and community leaders in the North Sinai Governorate on January 19-20. Our
- 2.(C) North Sinai Governor Mohammed Abd al-Fadil Shousha told us that his top priority is economic development of the governorate and the creation
- 3.(C) Abu Harb stated that one of the biggest challenges is the lack of legitimate job opportunities. The lack of jobs causes people to look for
- 4.(C) The central Sinai, including the area around the villages of al-Nakhl and Hassana, which is part of the North Sinai Governorate, is the area
- 5.(C) Ahmed Orabi, President of the North Sinai branch of the Egyptian Red Crescent, told us that central Sinai differs from the northern part
- 6.(C) All the leaders agreed that focusing on the agricultural sector is the best way to expand the North Sinai economy and provide jobs. Governor
- 7.(C) Both Dr. Kassas and Dr. Nasr see potential in organic farming because of the pristine nature of the local environment. They said many medical
- 8.(C) Governor Shousha stated that increasing the availability of water is the key to growing the local agriculture sector. According to the Governor
- 9.(SBU) Governor Shousha told us that the northeastern part of the peninsula did not need Nile water because there are water wells near Rafah and
- 10.(C) Some leaders noted that although Sinai is home to valuable raw materials and grows quality fruits and vegetables, most of these primary
- 11.(SBU) Most local leaders emphasized the need for governmental and non-governmental assistance to develop the region. Governor Shousha told us
- 12.(C) Gamal Selmy, a local National Democratic Party (NDP) councilman, said that while all Egyptian leaders declare the development of Sinai to
- 13.(C) All the leaders expressed their concern over the lack of peace in the region and the recent conflict in Gaza. They told us that the Gaza
- 14.(SBU) On a separate economic development topic, all the leaders expressed their support for developing a better primary education system in
- 15.(C) Comment: The North Sinai Governorate is one of the least economically developed regions in Egypt. After the Sinai Peninsula was returned